

The American Board of Dental Public Health
Incorporated 1950

Board Examination Guide

Revised December 2022



Sponsoring Organization:

American Association of Public Health Dentistry

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DEFINITION OF THE SPECIALTY

Dental Public Health is the science and art of preventing and controlling dental diseases and promoting dental health through organized community efforts. It is the form of dental practice that serves the community as a patient rather than the individual. It is concerned with the dental health education of the public, with applied dental research, and with the administration of group dental care programs, as well as the prevention and control of dental diseases on a community basis. Implicit in this definition is the requirement that the specialist have broad knowledge and skills in public health administration, research methodology, the prevention and control of oral diseases, and the delivery and financing of oral health care.

HISTORY

The American Board of Dental Public Health (ABDPH) was incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado in July 1950. The ABDPH was organized in accordance with the Requirements for Approval of Examining Boards in Dental Specialties of the American Dental Association (ADA) Council on Dental Education and Licensure. The ADA formally recognized Dental Public Health as a dental specialty in October 1950 and the ADA House of Delegates officially designated the ABDPH as the national examining and certifying agency for the specialty in October 1951. The ADA reviewed the ABDPH in 1986, 2001, 2011, and 2021. Currently, the ADA reviews recognized specialties on a 10-year cycle. The ABDPH is a not-for-profit organization.

DIRECTORS OF THE ABDPH

As defined in its Articles of Incorporation, the purposes of the Directors of the ABDPH, henceforth known as “the Board” are:

1. To protect and improve the public’s health by the study and creation of standards for the practice of Dental Public Health in all its aspects and relationships.
2. To grant and issue Dental Public Health specialty certificates to dentists who have successfully completed the prescribed training and experience requisite for acquiring the special knowledge and ability needed for the practice of Dental Public Health; and
3. To ensure continuing competency of Dental Public Health specialists.

The Board receives neither salaries nor compensation for services. The Board shall determine a candidate’s eligibility only after a comprehensive review of the candidate’s application and is not authorized to provide informal opinions about the eligibility of candidates.

ABDPH BOARD EXAMINATION

Upon completion of Dental Public Health preparation (See section on Advanced Dental Public Health Preparation), a dentist can apply for the ABDPH **Board Examination** to be certified as a specialist, known as a “Diplomate.”

The Board Examination has two parts consisting of: (1) the Qualifying Examination, and (2) the Certifying Examination. Both examinations are administered annually. The Qualifying Examination tests the candidate’s wide-ranging knowledge of the theory and practice of Dental Public Health (DPH). The Certifying Examination tests general knowledge of public health and the application of the Ten DPH Competency Statements (See Appendix A for **Examination** description).

Both exams are generally administered in the spring, immediately preceding the National Oral Health Conference. Exam sites are typically selected one year in advance and posted on the American

Association of Public Health Dentistry website, www.aaphd.org. In the event of public health emergencies or other crises, the Board may administer the examination by using virtual technology.

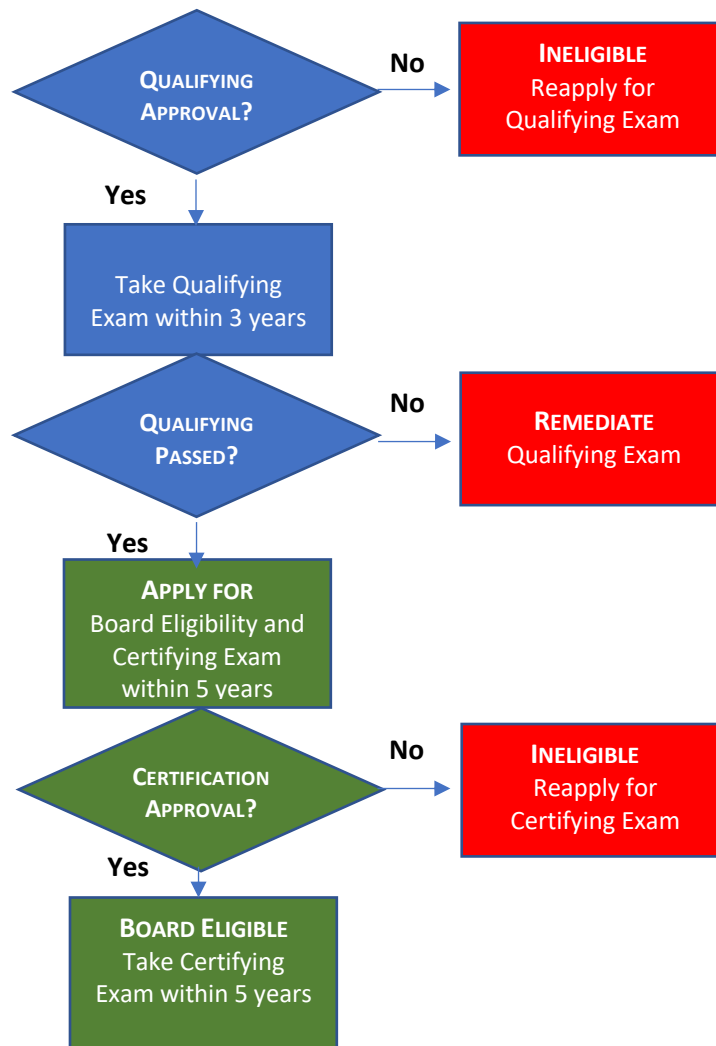
ELIGIBILITY FOR BOARD EXAMINATION

Requirements for eligibility to be examined by the Board are as follows:

1. Moral and ethical standing in the dental profession to a degree satisfactory to the Board.
2. Graduation from a school of dentistry accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) or from a Canadian dental school with accreditation recognized by CODA. Dentists educated in **other countries** must possess equivalent dental education as deemed by the Board.
3. Education in public health, which shall include successful completion of at least two years of advanced preparation for the practice of Dental Public Health.

The term “eligible” describes the status of a candidate whose application, credentials, and supporting documents have been reviewed and approved by the Board. Figure 1 illustrates that candidates must become eligible for each component of the Board Exam separately. Candidate shall comply with regulations in effect for the year in which the examination is held, regardless of the date of the original application.

Figure 1. Eligibility Process



Eligible:

- Candidates declared eligible by the Board for the Qualifying Examination must take and pass the examination within three years. No extensions will be granted.
- Candidates declared eligible by the Board for the Certifying Examination must take and pass the examination within five years.
- Candidates for the Certifying Examination may be granted one extension of five years at the Board's discretion, and upon payment of an additional fee (Refer to Appendix B, FEE SCHEDULE).

Ineligible:

- Candidates declared ineligible for either Qualifying or Certifying Examination may reapply for the respective exam within three years of the original filing date without paying an additional application fee.

ADVANCED DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH PREPARATION

According to the ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure, a Diplomate must have successfully completed an advanced education program in Dental Public Health. There are two pathways governing the Board's evaluation of previous Dental Public Health education:

1. A program accredited by CODA of at least two academic years of study leading to a master-level or doctoral-level graduate degree in Dental Public Health. Specifically, the course content shall include biostatistics; epidemiology; health care policy and management; environmental health; and behavioral sciences.
—OR—
2. (A) Completion of a graduate-level degree in public health, which shall include courses in biostatistics, epidemiology, health care policy and management, environmental health, and behavioral sciences. The typical degree is the Master of Public Health (MPH), but related degrees including doctoral-level degrees are acceptable, if course requirements are met. The degree must be from an educational institution accredited by a body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education at the time the degree was conferred. Canadian graduate degrees may be acceptable, providing graduate coursework and requirements are equivalent to U.S. graduate degrees as deemed by the Board.
—AND—
(B) Successful completion of a CODA-accredited Dental Public Health residency program. The length must be at least 12 months full-time or the equivalent in part-time. Part-time residencies may not exceed twice the length of a full-time residency. Currently [accredited Dental Public Residency Programs](#) include training on all aspects of dental public health, planned instruction, observation, and active participation in public health programming.

APPLICATIONS

Each component of the Board Examination has its own application with respective deadlines and fees. Deadlines are for the year prior to the date the candidate wishes to take the exam. If deadlines are missed, the candidate will have to take the examination the next year.

1. Qualifying Examination Application:
 - a. Candidates may attempt the written Qualifying Examination (QE) near the end of their advanced Dental Public Health preparation program, if at least 75% of the educational preparation has been completed.
 - b. A candidate must take and pass the QE prior to applying for the Certifying Examination.
 - c. Applications for the QE must be received by December 1 of the year prior to that in which the applicant wishes to take the examination.

- d. The QE application is available at www.abdph.org. The application must be signed by the candidate and submitted electronically as a Word document, along with a portable document format (PDF) file containing copies of credentials and supporting documentation, to the ABDPH Executive Director at executive.director@abdph.org.
 - e. Notification of eligibility to take the QE is sent to candidates on or about February 1 of the year of the examination. Any candidate declared ineligible for the QE has up to three years to meet any outstanding requirements, without incurring additional fees.
 - f. **NOTE:** Eligibility to take the QE does not guarantee that the applicant will be eligible for the subsequent Certifying Exam. All requirements must be met to qualify for the Certifying Exam.
2. Certifying Examination Application.
- a. The Certifying Examination (CE) application must be received by August 15 of the year prior to a candidate's intended examination date.
 - b. The CE application is available at www.abdph.org. The application must be signed by the candidate and submitted electronically to the ABDPH Executive Director at executive.director@abdph.org, as a PDF file along with the following supporting documentation:
 - i. Curriculum vitae
 - ii. Degree in dentistry (photocopy of degree or official transcript)
 - iii. Certificate or graduate degree in dental public health —or —degree in public health and residency certificate in dental public health (photocopy of degree or official transcripts)
 - iv. Additional documentation as requested. The Board may request transcripts or course syllabi to support transcripts. For example, for degrees other than an MPH, a transcript may be required to document requirements have been met. Or, for courses with vague names, a syllabus may be required to document that requirements have been met.
 - c. The Board will review candidates for Board Eligibility, and candidates will be notified by September 25. Candidates declared ineligible for the CE have up to three years to meet any outstanding requirements, without incurring additional fees. Once candidates are declared Board Eligible, they must challenge the CE within five years.
 - d. The eligible candidate must submit two (2) Project Reports as separate PDF files by October 1 of the year prior to the candidate's intended examination date. Candidates who receive notification from the Executive Director that there are problems with one or both PR should reply immediately. If deadlines are missed, the candidate will not be able to take the examination in the intended year.
 - e. Candidates will be notified of any failure of the Project Report(s) (PR) by February 1. Candidates who fail either PR cannot proceed.
 - f. The specific dates for the oral portions of the CE are given at least 60 days in advance.

BOARD CERTIFICATION

Candidates who successfully complete the Certifying Examination shall be designated as **Diplomates of the American Board of Dental Public Health**. Diplomates must maintain the moral and ethical precepts of the ABDPH. Diplomates will be issued ten-year time-limited certificates signed by the Board, to recognize exceptional knowledge and skills in Dental Public Health.

EXAMINATION FEES

Examination fees are due at the time of application or written Project Report submission. The total cost for the examination is paid in three installments:

1. The fee for Qualifying Examination is due at the time of submitting the application for that examination.
2. The fee for the Board Eligibility determination is due at the time of submitting the application.
3. The fee for the Certifying Examination is due when the exam commences, upon submitting the two PR.

The Board reserves the right to change the fee structure, content, and procedures of the ABDPH Board Examination (See Appendix B for the fee schedule).

CANDIDATE POSTPONEMENT OF THE BOARD EXAMINATION

Candidates should recognize that scientific knowledge advances with time — and that postponing the Board Examination may thus impact their performance and scores. Nonetheless, if a candidate has a scheduling conflict, the following applies:

1. **QE:** A candidate forfeits the fee by failing to take the examination or by receiving a failing score (grade below 70%).
2. **CE:**
 - a. For eligible candidates, the fee is valid for 5 years.
 - b. If candidate postpones the Oral CE Sections after February 1, the candidate must inform the Executive Director as soon as possible. Barring any extenuating circumstances, the full remediation fee will be required to reschedule.

RE-EXAMINATION & REMEDIATION

Candidates who fail either the **QE** or any part of the **CE** can apply to be re-examined. Note that additional fees will apply. Applications for re-examination must meet the same deadline as new applications. The candidates for re-examination do not need to submit new reference letters.

1. A candidate who fails the QE can retake it up to two additional times with payment of the appropriate fee.
2. Candidates failing the written PR cannot proceed to the remaining Oral CE sections. PR failures must be remediated with new or revised projects. Candidates should contact the Executive Director to discuss the options and the Board's recommendations. The one section remediation fee applies whether one or both PR received failing scores. Candidates may only remediate failures on the written Project Reports one time.
3. Candidates who fail any part of the oral CE sections shall be accepted for one re-examination by the Board.
 - a. If the candidate is unsuccessful on one oral section of the CE, that section of the examination needs to be remediated, and the candidate pays the one section remediation fee.
 - b. If the candidate is unsuccessful on both oral sections of the CE, at a minimum, both oral sections must be remediated, and the candidate will pay the full remediation fee. It will be at the discretion of the Board as to whether the written PR will also be re-examined.
4. If an overall average score of 70% is not achieved on the CE, it is considered a failure. It will be at the discretion of the Board as to the requirements for remediation and the corresponding fee for remediation. Candidates who wish to remediate a failure on the CE should contact the Executive Director to discuss options for re-examination.

5. Candidates who fail the CE re-examination shall be required to submit satisfactory evidence to the Board of additional formal training or supervised field experience in Dental Public Health before they can be readmitted for the CE.

Upon request, a candidate may receive from the Executive Director the results for each section of the CE and the final score. Written requests must be submitted within 60 days of completing the examination. Exams are not returned to the applicant for review for any reason, including an appeal.

APPEALS

A candidate who takes either the QE or CE has the right to appeal due to one of the following circumstances:

- a. A procedural or clerical error occurred during the administration of the examination.
—or—
 - b. Unusual circumstances may have affected a candidate's performance during the examination.
1. Regardless of the outcome of an appeal, examinations are not re-scored. The only permissible remedy in the case of a successful appeal is the re-examination the following year.
 2. Each appeal is subject to a non-refundable fee.
 3. All correspondence regarding an appeal will be through the Executive Director. Any correspondence becomes part of the candidate's file but does not modify or alter any decision made by the Board.
 4. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director within fourteen (14) days of the examination. The written appeal should be dated, identify in concise terms the decision being appealed, and provide a brief outline of the reasons for the appeal.
 5. No decision shall become final while an appeal is pending or until the fourteen (14) day period for filing notice of appeal has elapsed.
 6. The appeal will be reviewed to see if it meets the criteria. The appellant will be notified in writing of the receipt of the appeal, and whether the appeal will receive further review. If the appeal merits further review, the Board will respond within sixty (60) days from receipt of appeal.
 7. Appeals Review Process:
 - a. An Appeals Committee (AC) must be formed, which consists of the President from two years prior and two current Board Directors.
 - b. The AC will review the appeal and all relevant facts and submit their recommendation to the Board.
 - c. The final decision will then be transmitted by the Executive Director to the appellant.
 - d. If the decision is not acceptable to the appellant, the appellant has thirty (30) days to submit a second appeal.
 - e. A second committee, the Appeals Panel, is formed by the Board. The Appeals Panel consists of three past presidents (not including the past president serving on the AC). The Appeals Panel has sixty (60) days to process this appeal. If the appeal necessitates a hearing, the hearing will be scheduled at the next annual meeting of the Board. The appellant will incur the costs of their respective travel, and the Board will cover the travel costs for Appeals Panel members.
 - f. The recommendation of the Appeals Panel will be provided to the Board, which in turn will review it and submit its second and final response to the appellant.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION

As a Dental Specialty, the **ABDPH** is required by the ADA to collect annual registration fees from Diplomates. The fee is due in January, and the current cost of the annual registration fee is published every year along with registration materials. Active Diplomates receive a copy of the Board's annual financial report during the Annual Meeting of the Board or may request a copy by emailing the Executive Director.

Although not required, the Board encourages membership in the ADA, the American Public Health Association, and in its sponsoring organization, the American Association of Public Health Dentistry. Diplomates may also wish to join such organizations as the Hispanic Dental Association, the National Dental Association, and the Society of American Indian Dentists.

If the annual registration fee is not paid, the Diplomate is not in good standing and the following will occur:

- (1) The Diplomate's name will not appear in the list of Active Diplomates on ABDPH Home Page, www.abdph.org.
- (2) The Diplomate's name will not be included in the list that the Executive Director sends to the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Education and Licensure each year; and
- (3) verification requests for a Diplomate's status will include "not in good standing" in the reply.

To be reinstated to active status, the Diplomate must pay the unpaid annual registration fees and any assessed reinstatement fees. For further information, contact the Executive Director at executive.director@abdph.org

RECERTIFICATION

The process of recertification promotes life-long learning and ensures that Diplomates are of the highest quality for service to the public and the profession. Every ten-year period, Diplomates must attain recertification. Diplomates must have at least 150 hours of continuing education units (CEUs) in Dental Public Health over 10 years. The requirement for recertification applies only to Diplomates as of January 1, 2000, and afterwards. Recertification information is available online at www.abdph.org.

1. The Standards and Recertification Committee (SRC) consists of two active Diplomates, one current Board member, and the Executive Director. The SRC may audit Diplomates who are due for recertification. However, every year, the SRC must audit at least 10% of those due for recertification. The SRC reports to the Board. The Board votes to approve Diplomates' recertification, and issues new ten-year certificates.
2. Recertification includes the following steps:
 - a. Complete the ABDPH Recertification Application
 - b. Complete the ABDPH Summary Report of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for the relevant 10-year period. The form is available at www.abdph.org.
 - c. Include PDF file of CEUs documentation and the Recertification fee
 - d. Submit documents to the Executive Director, if being audited.
3. Diplomates are responsible for maintaining their respective CEUs including copies and summaries documenting compliance with the Recertification Process.
4. Although some active Diplomates may be exempt from the requirement, the Board urges all Diplomates to apply for recertification in 10-year intervals. If a Diplomate certified prior to January 1, 2000, desires recertification, there is no fee.
5. Acceptable continuing education includes learning activities that contribute to maintaining or enhancing competency in Dental Public Health including:

- a. Scholarly activity, such as manuscripts published in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at scientific meetings and providing continuing education courses and lectures.
 - b. Documentation of attendance or letters of completion from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry, International or American Associations for Dental Research, American Public Health Association, Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, and other recognized national and international organizations that have institutionalized continuing professional development programs related to the competencies in Dental Public Health are acceptable.
 - c. Documentation of attendance or letters of completion from other sponsors of continuing education relevant to the field of Dental Public Health if the activities can be directly linked to the Dental Public Health Competency Statements (J Public Health Dent 2016; 76 (Suppl): S3-S28).
 - d. Authorship of publications related to Dental Public Health. A publication is defined as a book, a chapter of a book, or a paper published in a professional journal. Publications of manuals, workshop proceedings, and background papers are also acceptable. The acceptable number of credits will vary from 5 to 10 depending upon the nature of the publication.
 - e. Attendance at formal lectures, symposia, workshops, and conferences relevant to the field of Dental Public Health. This activity will be given credit provided the material present organize around and directed toward identified competency statements. The number of credits will be equal to the number of hours attended.
 - f. Completion of individualized continuing education instruction. Individualized instruction is defined as a course of study that is structured and organized toward accomplishing competency in Dental Public Health. The instruction must include a method for providing feedback to the learner on performance. Documentation of the number of credits must be available for audit.
 - g. Learning activities that are repeated on a periodic basis will be given credit only once in a ten-year period. The routine performance of teaching duties in an undergraduate or graduate curriculum or the routine participation in organizational meetings will not be given credits.
6. Diplomates may appeal the findings of the SRC. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director along with appropriate documents within sixty (60) days of the notification. The appeal should clearly identify the areas of disagreement and provide supporting evidence. The appeal will be reviewed by the Board and responded to within sixty (60) days of the receipt.
 7. The Board may issue a conditional recertification to a Diplomate without the adequate CEUs, if the Diplomate agrees to make up any deficiencies.
 8. A Diplomate who is notified of the denial of recertification for failure to submit CEUs evidence may be subject to disciplinary actions. Failure to meet the CEUs requirements may be considered a departure from the tenets of sound dental public health practice, and the Board has the power to revoke a Diplomate's Certification.

LISTING OF DIPLOMATES

A listing of Diplomates is updated and submitted annually to the ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure. A copy of this list is available upon request from the Executive Director.

VERIFICATION OF DIPLOMATE STATUS

Requests for verification must be submitted in writing; electronic requests are preferred. Information is available online, www.abdph.org under “Verification.” Requests must include a signed general release of information and remittance of the appropriate fee (See Appendix C for Payment Information).

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Diplomates who are fully retired from the practice of Dentistry, Dental Public Health, or Public Health may apply for Life Membership. Details are available at www.abpdh.org under “Application Life Membership.” Diplomates must be in good standing, must be current on their annual registration fees, and must maintain the moral and ethical precepts of the specialty.

1. Benefits of Life Membership:
 - a. Listed on ABDPH website.
 - b. Receive ABDPH Newsletters.
 - c. Pay no Annual Registration Fees.
 - d. Receive the invitation to the Diplomates Annual Dinner and Business Meeting at the same cost as other Diplomates, and
 - e. Other benefits that the Board deems appropriate.
2. Criteria for Life Membership:
 - a. No Fee Applications
 - i. Active Diplomates for 20 years or more, who are completely retired from the practice of Dentistry, Dental Public Health, or Public Health.
 - ii. Active Diplomates for 10 years or more, who are age 65 years or older and completely retired from the practice of Dentistry, Dental Public Health, or Public Health.
 - b. One-Time Fee Applications (**See Appendix B for fee schedule**)
 - i. Active Diplomates for fewer than 10 years, who are completely retired from the practice of Dentistry, Dental Public Health, or Public Health.
 - ii. Diplomates who are retired from the full-time practice of Dental Public Health or Public Health but continue to practice Dentistry part-time no more than 200 hours per year (0.1 FTE).
3. The Board will review the application. If approved, the Diplomate will receive the Certificate of Life Membership.

POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION

The ABDPH does not condone or accept discrimination or harassment based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, place of education, or country of origin or residence. The Board will consider all complaints filed in writing, investigate, and respond appropriately.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

The Board complies with the American with Disabilities Act by ensuring that persons with disabilities have physical access to the testing facilities. Further, the Board will administer the examination in a manner that can accommodate a candidate with disabilities. The application forms provide space for indicating a disability, and the Board solicits suggestions as to how the disability can be best accommodated.

Candidates requiring accommodation are encouraged to contact the Executive Director. The Board will provide modifications, where possible, for candidates with disabilities.

AAPHD FOUNDATION LOTZKAR FUND

The Lotzkar Fund was established in 2003 to honor Dr. Stanley Lotzkar and his wife, Phyllis Lotzkar. Dr. Lotzkar was a leader in Dental Public Health and provided 21 years of exemplary service to the Board as Executive Secretary. The Lotzkar Fund is used solely to advance the mission and objectives of the ABDPH and is administered by the American Association of Public Health Dentistry Foundation. Criteria for funding by the Lotzkar Fund are:

1. To support the development of new initiatives of the Board;
2. To support maintenance of standards and competency in Dental Public Health; and
3. To support curriculum development in Dental Public Health.

Donations can be made to: AAPHD Foundation Lotzkar Fund, 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 200, Springfield, IL 62703. Tel: 217-529-6941.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidates or Diplomates with questions or concerns should email the Executive Director, executive.director@abdph.org.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board takes into serious consideration issues of fairness, conflicts of interest and transparency. The Board is comprised of active Diplomates who have mentored candidates or are current or former Program Directors. Thus, Board members with conflicts of interest are required to recuse themselves from discussions about the respective candidate's application, may not score the candidate's PRs, and may not serve as the candidate's examiner during the Certification Examination. Board members with a conflict of interest may not serve as a reference for an applicant.

TESTING POLICIES

The Board evaluates all components of the examination annually. Also, after the examination, each candidate has an opportunity to comment about the examination and processes and to suggest improvements.

1. The Board strives for fairness through the administration, design, development, implementation, and scoring of the examinations. The commitment to fairness includes reducing or eliminating bias in questions, and equitably treating of all candidates.
2. Test takers have the right to¹:
 - a. Be treated with courtesy, respect, and impartiality, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.
 - b. Be tested with measures that meet professional standards and that are appropriate.
 - c. Receive a brief oral or written explanation prior to testing about the kind(s) of tests to be used.
 - d. Know in advance of testing when the test will be administered, when test results will be available, and if there is a fee for testing services.
 - e. Present concerns about the testing process or results and receive information about procedures that will be used to address such concerns.
3. Test takers have the responsibility to¹:
 - a. Treat others with courtesy and respect during the testing process.

¹ (2022, January 27). Modified from Rights and responsibilities of test takers: Guidelines and expectations. <https://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/rights>

- b. Ask questions prior to testing if uncertain about why the test is being given, how it will be given, what test takers will be asked to do, and what will be done with the results.
 - c. Read or listen to descriptive information in advance of testing and listen carefully to all test instructions.
 - d. Inform an examiner in advance of testing of a request for a testing accommodation, or of a physical condition or illness that may interfere with performance on the test. If you have difficulty comprehending the language of the test, it is your responsibility to inform an examiner.
 - e. Know when and where the test will be given, pay for the test if required, appear on time with any required materials, and be ready to be tested.
4. The Board Exam is offered only in English. As is required by the Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties, “Each board shall require, for eligibility for certification as a diplomate, the successful completion of an advanced education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of two or more academic years in length, as specified by the Commission.”² All prospective candidates will have completed specialty training conducted in English language in the U.S. or Canada. Further, demonstrated English competency is required of international candidates as a condition of acceptance to a U.S. or Canadian program.

ABDPH reserves the right to subject all exam materials, including Project Reports, to plagiarism checking software. Computer-based testing will also be subjected to monitoring. Cases of plagiarism and other violations will be reviewed by the Board and are subject to disciplinary action, which could include (but is not limited to) failing the exam and being barred from taking the exam in the future.

² (2022 January 27). American Dental Association. Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists. <https://ncrdscb.ada.org/~media/NCRDSCB/Files/requirements.pdf?la=en>

Appendices

A. ABDPH BOARD EXAMINATION DESCRIPTION

The Qualifying Examination is comprised of multiple-choice (MC) questions (80% of score) and short-answer questions (20%). The score for the MC questions is based upon the number of correct answers; thus, candidates should choose what they consider to be the most correct answer for each question (Do not leave questions unanswered). Examinees are allowed to bring into the examination room only a pen, No. 2 pencil(s), pencil eraser, time piece, and a pocket calculator. There are some simple calculations on a several questions, and a calculator, although not necessary, would be helpful. Cell or smart phones, iPads, or tablets are not allowed. A proctor will be available during the hours allocated for the qualifying examination. The proctor will not be able to answer any questions. The Qualifying Examination may be administered electronically by using a commercial testing service. In such situations, the Board will inform candidates of the test-taking details and technical requirements. Candidates must score at least **70%** to pass and move onto the Certification Examination.

The Certifying Examination has 3 sections totaling 100%:

- (1) Written Project Reports (30%);
- (2) Oral Examination on the Project Reports (30%); and
- (3) Oral Examination on an Assigned Problem (40%).

Each section of the Certification Examination is scored separately and weighted for a total score. The minimum score on a section is 60% however a total score of **70%** is required to pass.

Section 1: Written Project Reports

Each report should summarize a Dental Public Health project originated by the candidate, or one in which the candidate made a major contribution to its planning, implementation, and interpretation.

1. The Project Reports (PRs) should demonstrate a depth of experience in dental public health and must represent two separate projects (not two reports from one project). Each report must have distinct methodology and data sources, and at least one report must demonstrate the analytical and statistical skills of the candidate. The chosen projects must represent an extensive effort and have been completed within 10 years of the applicant's examination.
2. **Scoring PRs.** The Board evaluates the PR as received. Scores will be reduced if required elements are missing. Candidates are scored based on demonstrating logical processes and scientific rigor. Clarity in writing and overall style of the report are important. Candidates are advised to consider syntax, grammar, presentation, formatting, and strict adherence to the writing guidelines.
3. Acceptable PR include:
 - a) administrative program planning and implementation
 - b) epidemiologic studies
 - c) health services research studies
 - d) clinical trials
 - e) oral health promotion and disease prevention projects
 - f) meta-analysis (must include quantitative analysis)
 - g) secondary analyses of collected data (NOTE: applicants may not use the same secondary data source for two PRs - e.g., NHANES data cannot be used for both PRs)
 - h) other research projects related to Dental Public Health may be acceptable. Contact the Executive Director if you are unsure.

4. Not acceptable for PRs:
 - a. Reviews of the literature (e.g., literature reviews, scoping reviews, systematic reviews)
 - b. Research protocols
 - c. Grant applications
 - d. White papers
 - e. Policy statements
 - f. Site visit reports
 - g. Preparations for a conference
5. The research or administrative project must be completed at the time of submission. Incomplete projects will receive a failing score.
6. The submitted report should be well-written and of publishable quality. The PR should be no more than 25 double-spaced, numbered pages, including the cover page, table of contents, abstract, main body of the report, references, tables and figures, and appendices. All margins should be one inch on standard 8.5 x 11-inch page size.
7. The Board strongly recommends having the final manuscript reviewed by your Program Director or someone with experience in editing scientific publications.
8. The ABDPH Board format is **precisely** as follows. Do not alter the order of the sections. Label sections (**bolded items**, below); the cover page does not need to be labelled as such.
 - a. **Cover Page.** Do not include your name. Include assigned code, PR number, and title of the project [Example: 2023-007 PR1: My Project's Title].
 - b. **Table of Contents.**
 - c. **Abstract.** Structured abstract that are no longer than 250 words with clearly labeled: Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions/Recommendations.
 - d. **Candidate's Role.** Describe in one or two paragraphs with sufficient level of detail your specific role. Explain your participation in the planning, implementation, interpretation, and completion of the project. Candidates must be the originator of, or a major contributor to, the project. Also include information on any collaborations pertinent to the project, and how you developed these relationships and worked with collaborators.
 - e. **Problem Identification.** Describe the public health problem addressed in the project.
 - f. **Background and Literature Review.** Describe the current pertinent literature. Candidates should not only describe the studies supporting hypothesis or objectives, but also should provide some assessment of the quality of the works cited.
 - g. **Objective(s) and Hypothesis(es).** Describe study/project objective(s) and/or the specific hypothesis(es).
 - h. **Methods and Procedures.** Provide sufficient information to demonstrate the logical process and scientific rigor of the approach to test the hypothesis or achieve the objectives. Include analytic methods with sufficient level of detail. Include information on how social determinants of health were considered and incorporated into the project. Reports must also address consideration of human subjects, including consent and assent, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, if applicable. If a study involves human subjects and was exempt from IRB, explain why. In general, an administrative project would not require an IRB.
 - i. **Results.** Aside from text, include self-standing information in tables and graphs.
 - j. **Discussion.** This section should be comprehensive and clear, and address the following:

- i. Did the project achieve its objectives?
 - ii. Did the project support or reject the hypotheses?
 - iii. How do results agree or disagree with similar studies?
 - iv. Provide potential reasons for lack of agreement with other studies' findings.
 - v. Highlight how results contribute to filling knowledge gaps, resolving controversies, or providing new knowledge on the topic.
 - vi. What are the public health implications of the results?
 - vii. Strengths and limitations of the study. Include what would be done differently if the project was to be repeated.
- k. **Conclusions.** Emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and recommendations that follow from them, particularly as these relate to public health policy.
- l. **References.** Candidates should use the "Vancouver" style as described in the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* [Instructions for Contributors](#). All references in the text must be included in the list of references. References should not be repeated. The candidate must verify cited references against the original publications. Identify references with Arabic numerals in parentheses consecutively in the order they are mentioned in the text. Avoid using abstracts as references. "Unpublished observations" and "personal communications" may not be used as references. References to written communications may be inserted in parentheses within the text. For papers accepted but not yet published, identify the journal, and add "In press." Information from manuscripts submitted, but not yet accepted, should be cited in the text as "unpublished observations" (in parentheses).
- m. **Tables and Figures.** Number these in the order in which they appear in the report (as described above). Do not cut and paste output directly from statistical software. Titles should describe the table or image (e.g., population represented, place of the study, and time/year). Use footnotes to clarify acronyms or groups in the table that are statistically compared. Use Arabic numbers for each footnote. A large table can be broken into two components with clarification on the title that the second part is a continuation of a previous table. Graphs should be easy to understand and used to clarify an item that is not visually clear in the tables. Make graphs of appropriate size and clearly label. Do not break a figure across separate pages.
- n. **Appendices.** Appendices are included in the page count. Provide additional documentation in support of the methods in an appendix. Do not use the Appendix for figures and tables.

Section 2: Oral Examination on Project Reports

This section evaluates a candidate's ability to discuss, defend, and explain various aspects of dental public health projects, from the previously submitted PR.

1. For each PR, the candidate must present a five-minute overview of the project, followed by 30 minutes of questions from the examiners.
2. Candidate may bring the copies of PR for their reference. Additionally, candidates may bring new tables, graphs, and copies of data abstraction or instruments forms used in the respective projects. No additional reference materials are allowed. Upon completion of this section, must leave all copies and documents with the Board.
3. Candidates will be expected to answer questions to:

- i) display their familiarity with all aspects of their respective PR, including research, epidemiological, and administrative methodology;
- ii) justify selection of the project protocol and consideration of alternatives; and
- iii) display general knowledge of topics related to dental public health.

Section 3: Oral Examination on Assigned Problem.

This section is a test of candidates' ability to analyze and generate solutions to a hypothetical dental public health problem. A written description and supplementary information on the Assigned Problem will be given to each candidate on the first day of the exam. Candidates will have approximately 24 hours to prepare their response. An oral examination of the candidate's solution to the problem will be conducted the following day. Candidates will be given 20 minutes to present their solutions, followed by 40 minutes for questions from the examiners. Candidates may bring written notes to this examination for reference while making their presentation. The Assigned Problem, handouts and notes must be returned after the presentation.

A candidate is expected to demonstrate the following abilities:

1. Understand information provided;
2. Present rational solutions and alternatives based on the available information;
3. Assess the rationale for selecting the choice of approaches; and
4. Evaluate the reasonableness and practicality of the choice of solution regarding timing, resources, public and professional acceptance, legal and ethical considerations, cost-effectiveness, and justification of the resources required.

Evaluation of Oral Examination Sections

1. Candidates should appreciate that there is no single correct solution for questions posed for the PR and the Assigned Problem. Responses are expected to be reasonable, practical, and realistic.
2. For the Assigned Problem, any proposed solution must represent the candidate's own work and critical thinking. The candidate may provide a handout to each examiner that summarizes the components of their solution. PowerPoint presentations on a video display are not allowed due to time constraints, however, a PowerPoint handout is acceptable. Handouts should not exceed 3 pages.

B. 2023 EXAM FEE SCHEDULE‡

Qualifying Examination	\$700
Board Eligibility Application	\$500
Certifying Examination	\$1,000
Re-examination or Rescheduling Fees	
Qualifying Examination	\$450
Partial Remediation (one section)	\$400
Full Remediation	\$1,000
Appeal Fees	
Appeal (each)	\$300
Other	
Diplomate Registration	\$250
Five-Year Extension (one-time)	\$250
Life Membership (one-time)	\$250
Recertification	\$250
Reinstatement	\$75
Verification	\$150

‡Fees are updated annually. Fees for the current exam cycle apply to all cases.

C. PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please remit the appropriate amount online at www.abdph.org. To pay via check, make check payable to American Board of Dental Public Health to the address below:

American Board of Dental Public Health
19 Colonnade Way, Ste 117
PMB #184
State College, PA 16803

D. Frequently Asked Questions about Retaking the Board Exam

What if I failed...	You can...	Regular Exam Cycle Dates Apply†	Fees‡
...the Qualifying Exam (QE)?	...retake the QE up to 2 times.	Apply for re-examination by December 1	Qualifying Exam fee applies. <i>2023 QE: \$450</i>
...1 written PR?	<p>...remediate next year by submitting 1 new or revised written PR. You are ineligible for the oral examination this year.</p> <p>Discuss this option with the ED for guidance about what approach (i.e., new PR or revise the failing PR) will give you the best chances of passing. A revised PR may be recommended if there are no critical flaws in the project. A new PR may be required if the project does not meet basic eligibility criteria (e.g., a scoping review or white paper cannot be revised).</p>	<p>1) Apply for re-examination by August 15</p> <p>2) Submit PR by October 1</p>	Partial Remediation (1 section) applies regardless of whether 1 or 2 PRs are remediated. <i>2023 Partial Remediation: \$400</i>
...2 written PRs?	<p>...remediate next year by submitting 2 new or revised written PRs. You are ineligible for the oral examination this year.</p> <p>Discuss this option with the ED for guidance about what approach (i.e., new PR or revise the failing PR) will give you the best chances of passing. A revised PR may be recommended if there are no critical flaws in the project. A new PR may be required if the project does not meet basic eligibility criteria (e.g., a scoping review or white paper cannot be revised).</p>	<p>1) Apply for re-examination by August 15</p> <p>2) Submit PRs by October 1</p>	Partial Remediation (1 section) fee applies regardless of whether 1 or 2 PRs are remediated. <i>2023 Partial Remediation: \$400</i>
...the oral examination of the PRs?	...retake the oral examination of the PRs.	Apply for re-examination by August 15	Partial Remediation (1 section) fee applies. <i>2023 Partial Remediation: \$400</i>
...the oral examination of the PRs and my written PR scores were low?	If your written PR scores were low, you may elect to submit 1-2 new or revised written PRs. Discuss this option with the ED for suggestions about what approach will give you the best chances of passing the re-examination.	<p>1) Apply for re-examination by August 15</p> <p>2) Submit PR(s) by October 1</p>	Full Remediation (2 sections) fee applies. <i>2023 Full Remediation: \$1,000</i>
...the Assigned Problem?	...retake the Assigned Problem.	Apply for re-examination by August 15	Partial Remediation (1 section) fee applies. <i>2023 Partial Remediation: \$400</i>

What if I failed...	You can...	Regular Exam Cycle Dates Apply†	Fees‡
<p>...both the Assigned Problem and the oral exam of the PRs?</p>	<p>...retake both oral sections. The Board also will review your written PR scores to determine whether these need to be re-examined with revised or new PRs. If the Board determines that a candidate is unlikely to pass the exam (i.e., obtain an overall average score of at least 70%) with current PR scores, you may be asked to submit 1-2 new or revised written PRs.</p> <p>Further, if your written PR scores were low, you can elect to submit 1-2 new or revised written PRs. Discuss re-examination with the ED for suggestions about what approach will give you the best chances of passing.</p>	<p>1) Apply for re-examination by August 15 2) Submit PR(s) by October 1</p>	<p>Full Remediation fee applies. <i>2023 Full Remediation: \$1,000</i></p>
<p>...I failed the re-examination?</p>	<p>...talk to the ED about developing a plan for additional formal training or experience.</p>	<p>Remediation plan must be completed to the Board's satisfaction before applying for re-examination.</p>	<p>Full Remediation fee applies. <i>2023 Full Remediation: \$1,000</i></p>